

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 03176 201518Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 FBO-02 L-03 EUR-12 SS-15 A-01
OPR-02 NSC-05 OC-06 CCO-00 SY-05 /062 W
-----210406Z 103907 /23-11
R 201425Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4080

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 3176

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ABLD AFSP AEMR ET
SUBJECT: ASMARA CONSULATE GENERAL

REFS. A. ADDIS 3090 B. ADDIS 2867 C. STATE 102193
D. ADDIS 2764

1. ATO MENGESHA, HEAD OF THE ASMARA " COMMITTEE", HAS ADVISED THE EMBASSY THAT HIS COMMITTEE HAS DECIDED THAT EITHER THE EPMG SHOULD GUARD THE CONSULATE GENERAL COMPOUND OR EMPLOYEES OF THE USG SHOULD GUARD THE COMPOUND, BUT NOT BOTH. IN LIGHT OF THE EXCELLENT COOPERATION WE HAVE BEEN RECEIVING FROM ATO MENGESHA AND HIS COMMITTEE, AS WELL AS EPMG'S GOOD RECORD SO FAR IN PROVIDING PROTECTION FOR THE COMPOUND, WE RECOMMEND THAT GUARDING THE COMPOUND BE LEFT WITH THE EPMG. THIS VIEW IS CONCURRED IN BY OUR ETHIOPIAN EMPLOYEES IN ASMARA, WHO WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE ACCESS TO THE COMPOUND DURING OFFICE HOURS. PLEASE ADVISE.

2. WE RECOMMEND THE FOLLOWING ON DISPOSITION OF CONGEN PROPERTY:

A. WE SHOULD MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO SELL FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. ATO
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HAGOS, ASSISTANT GSO, BELIEVES THERE WILL BE A GOOD MARKET FOR HOUSEHOLD FURNISHINGS, OFFICE FURNISHINGS AND OFFICE EQUIPMENT.
B. OF THE FOUR VEHICLES REMAINING IN ASMARA, WE RECOMMEND THAT THE TWO CARRYALLS BE SHIPPED OUT OF ASMARA AND THAT TWO BE AUCTIONED OR WRITTEN OFF. ATO HAGOS BELIEVES THAT THERE IS LITTLE OR NO

MARKET FOR MOTOR VEHICLES IN ASMARA AND THAT WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO DRIVE THE TWO CARRYALLS TO MASSAWA FOR ONWARD SHIPMENT.

C. WE SHOULD START TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SALE OF THE CONGEN PREMISES. ALTHOUGH THERE MAY BE SOME DIFFICULTY IN OBTAINING A FAIR PRICE FOR THE PROPERTY, WE BELIEVE ANY ATTEMPT ON OUR PART TO RETAIN THIS PROPERTY INDEFINITELY WOULD BE MISINTERPRETED BY THE EMPG, WHO WILL CERTAINLY SEE ANY SUCH ATTEMPT AS CONNECTED WITH SOME KIND OF USG ASSESSMENT RE FUTURE OF ERITREA, IN PARTICULAR, AN EFFORT TO HOLD ON TO PROPERTY IN ANTICIPATION OF ERITREAN INDEPENDENCE. NEEDLESS TO SAY, IF AND WHEN EPMG REACHES SUCH A CONCLUSION, IT WILL NOT ONLY HAVE AN ADVERSE POLITICAL IMPACT, BUT COULD EASILY TRIGGER AN EPMG MOVE TO ARBITRARILY TAKE OVER COMPOUND. MOREOVER, IT IS NOT AT ALL CLEAR WHEN WE WOULD HAVE USE FOR THIS PROPERTY IN THE FUTURE, MAKING ITS RETENTION VERY QUESTIONABLE.

3. WHILE WE ARE NOT ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN, IT APPEARS THAT THE EPMG WILL PROBABLY BE WILLING TO ALLOW US TO SEND AN AMERICAN OFFICER TO ASMARA TO HELP IN MAKING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE DISPOSITION OF THIS PROPERTY SHOULD THAT BE REQUIRED. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE ITALIAN EMBASSY HAS BEEN ASSURED INFORMALLY THAT THEY MAY SEND ONE OF THEIR EMBASSY OFFICERS TO ASMARA IN CONNECTION WITH CLOSURE OF THEIR CONSULATE
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GENERAL AS WELL AS PROVIDING SERVICES TO THE ITALIAN COMMUNITY THERE.

4. IT ALSO SEEMS LIKELY, GIVEN THE WORKLOAD INVOLVED, THAT WE WILL REQUIRE THE SERVICES OF TWO OR THREE OF OUR ETHIOPIAN EMPLOYEES AT THE CONSULATE GENERAL BEYOND THEIR CURRENT TERMINATION DATE OF JUNE 27. WE WOULD APPRECIATE THE DEPARTMENT'S VIEWS ON SUCH AN EXTENSION.

5. EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED COPY OF 1950 PURCHASE CONTRACT FROM FBO AND HAS PROVIDED A COPY TO MOFA.

6. SEPTTEL FOLLOWS ON KAGNEW.
TIENKEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 20-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ADDIS03176
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770181-0398
Format: TEL
From: ADDIS ABABA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770538/aaaabgcn.tel
Line Count: 111
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 153f408f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 ADDIS ABABA 3090, 77 ADDIS ABABA 2764
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2444993
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ASMARA CONSULATE GENERAL
TAGS: ABLD, AFSP, AEMR, ET
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/153f408f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009